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CULTURE CRINGE

PDC

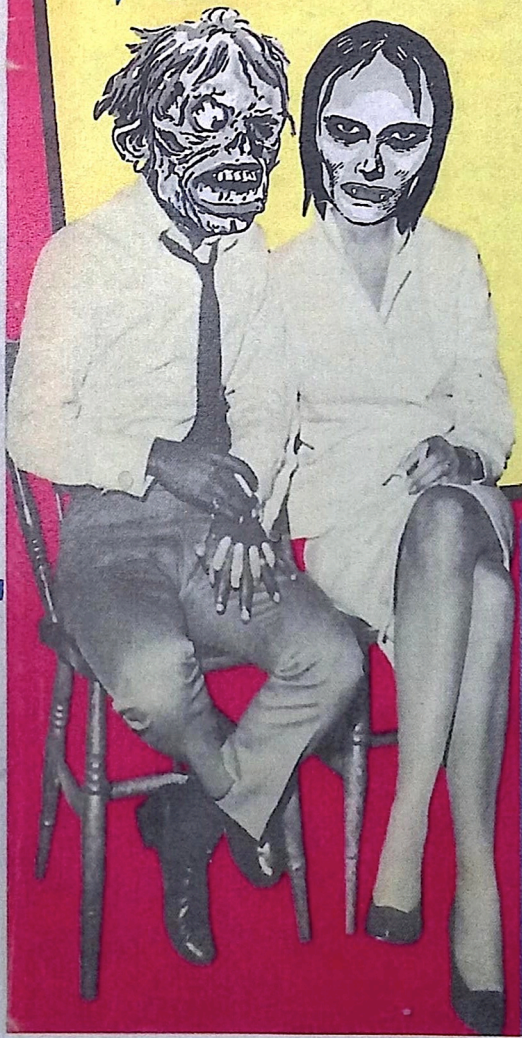
JAN 2026

NEW YEAR!
NEW ISSUE!

EXTRA EXTRA

EXTRA SPECIAL ISSUE FOR

YOU!



EXCLUSIVE:

INCLUDES INTERVIEW WITH DARK AMBIENT SHOEGAZE ARTIST

CULT FRIENDS

plus all the other things you've come to expect.

GREETINGS / GREETINGS / GREETINGS / GREETINGS / GREETINGS / GREETINGS / GREETINGS / GREETINGS / GREETINGS /

once again, thank you for picking this up (appreciation)

It appears that this is the first issue of 2026 - and it should be noted that 14 years ago i put out the very first issue of culture cringe and would've never guessed i'd still be doing this all this time later. MIND YOU, my early issues were very simple - more like glorified handbills. Flyers, if you will. One page, but FULL OF CONTENT. So here's the year 14 of my zine and hopefully i'll still be doing this in another 14 years. Ya know, if we still have printers....and society.....and free will.....and weather.

some random stories for your consideration.

I just watched that movie called **SONG SUNG BLUE** about the Neil Diamond tribute band. While it was just "ok", it reminded me of the time I saw Neil play back in 2001. It was only a few weeks after 9/11 - actually I think it might have been the first show at the arena after all that went down. They were handing out little american flags when you walked in, and the Diamond man totally opened with **AMERICA** while everyone waved their mini-flags. Let me tell ya, it was **SOMETHING** to behold. After that song, he said a few words and then said "tonight, let's let the healing begin." Then he proceeded to kill it song after song. I was mostly fascinated by the fact that his drummer was non other than Ron Tutt, who played with Elvis. He sorta played drums like Animal from the Muppets. Oh one more thing, Neil **CLOSED** the show with America as well. That's right, he opened with it and closed with it. Sure, Neil!

random story number 2. (random story #2.)

NOW I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE GRAMMYS AT ALL, BUT THE LEGENDARY INDIE ROCK BAND **TSUNAMI** TOTALLY GOT A NOMINATION FOR THEIR MOST EXCELLENT BOX SET THAT CAME OUT LAST YEAR. IT WAS RELEASED BY **NUMERO GROUP** WHO CONTINUE TO OUTDO THEMSELVES. ANYWAYS BACK TO TSUNAMI. I SAW THEM PLAY AT **LUCY'S RECORD SHOP** BACK IN THE MID-90S AND THEY WERE SOOOOO GOOD. I WANTED TO WRITE SONGS LIKE **JENNY TOOMEY** BUT I JUST....COULDN'T. BUT TRUST ME I TRIED. WHEN THEY PLAYED AT LUCY'S A NEW UNKNOWN BAND OPENED FOR THEM CALLED... WAIT FOR IT....**MODEST MOUSE**. THEY PLAYED TO MAYBE 10-15 PEOPLE? I REMEMBER THEM BEING INCREDIBLY LOUD. AND VERY LOOSE. WHEN THEY HAD THAT BIG SONG COME OUT A FEW YEARS LATER ON THE RADIO, I COULD NOT BELIEVE IT WAS THE SAME BAND. THE POINT OF THIS SHORT ESSAY IS SIMPLE - I DIDN'T THINK I'D EVER SEE THE DAY THAT A BAND LIKE TSUNAMI WOULD GET NOMINATED FOR A FREAKIN GRAMMY AWARD. I WONDER IF JENNY WILL ATTEND? I HOPE SO. WHY NOT. I HOPE THEY WIN. SO CRAZY.

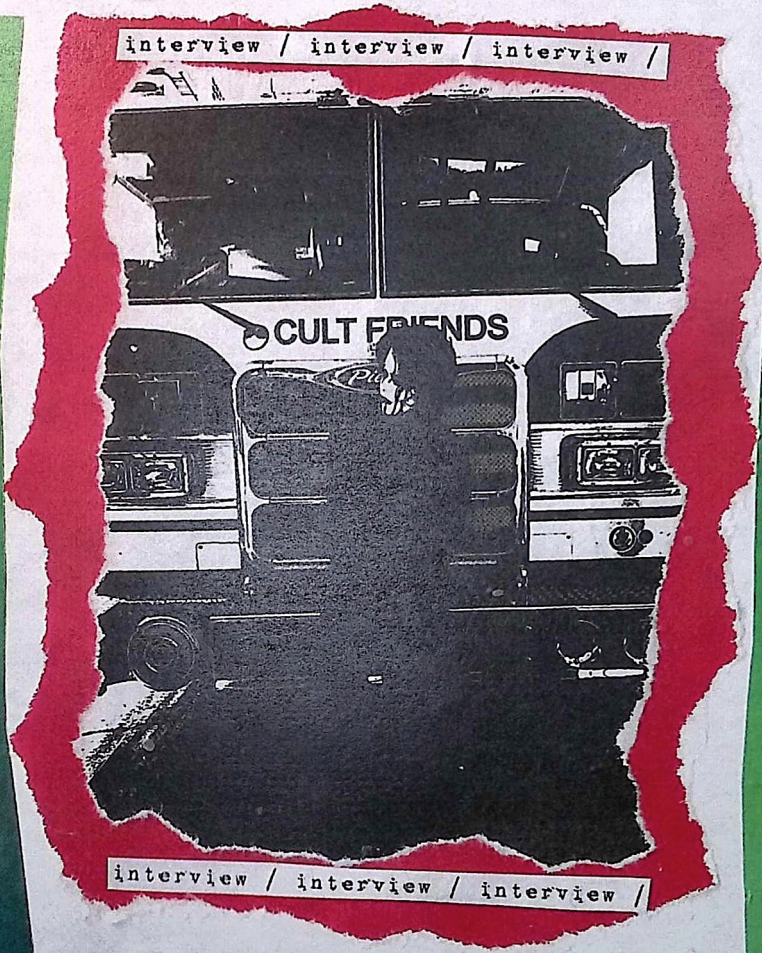
is this the end? NO!

random story #3 on back page

INTERVIEW

- WITH -

cult friends



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interview / interview / interview / interview / interview /

I stumbled upon the amazing music of CULT FRIENDS via (I think) a reddit post. Someone suggested it. I checked it out. I loved it. Very few artists pull me in as quickly as this one did - i immediately vibed with the sound. I reached out to CULT FRIENDS (who by the way resides in Spain) and asked if she'd answer a few questions....and was thrilled when she said yeah! So here we go, stop wasting time, turn that page.....

Before reading with Q&A with **Cult Friends** I'd like to encourage you to put their music on as *background accompaniment*. You can find it on bandcamp (cultfriends.bandcamp), soundcloud (/cultfriends), as well as nearly any streaming service. Maybe start with the latest release, **God is Written All Over Your Walls**. *I think you'll like it.* **And now, on with the interview.....**

question

CC: Tell me a little about your musical origin story.... how long have you been writing and recording your own material? Was the guitar your first instrument?

cult friends: I've been writing for as long as I can remember. I have a vivid memory of me being six years old, strumming my parents' wildly out-of-tune charango and singing to the moon. And I've always been deeply obsessive about songwriting— my cousin recently reminded me that I used to transcribe lyrics, translate them, and dissect them line by line. Recording — especially recording with any consistency — didn't begin until after high school, and it took me even longer to feel comfortable letting anyone hear it. I still struggle with singing in front of people; music feels intensely personal to me, which is why exposing it still feels disorienting.

Guitar wasn't my first instrument. I actually wasn't allowed to play it. My parents put me in piano lessons, and I played percussion in my middle school band. Around age thirteen, I started secretly sneaking a Cordoba mini guitar from the living room into my bedroom and teaching myself through YouTube tutorials. The guitar immediately felt natural on my body. I eventually played in jazz bands in high school and a bit in college. I still struggle to play in standard tuning— my muscle memory tends to default to bebop lines and basic jazz voicings.

question

CC: Your music is drenched in atmosphere - and very visual provoking. What all inspires you to produce your music in your atmospheric style?

cult friends: I don't consciously think about it while I'm making music. I think more about context— how the same object can feel entirely different depending on the space it's placed in. A plain monobloc chair feels one way in an empty white room and completely different in a dense forest. Nothing about the chair changes, but everything about how you relate to it does.

What if the walls were finished with skip-trowel stucco? What if there was a rug beneath the chair, slightly damp, and a 1000-kelvin lamp in the corner? What if the chair were painted black, swallowing light instead of reflecting it?

That's how sound works for me. I approach music the way I think an interior designer might approach a room.

The room is the atmosphere, and the atmosphere **is** the room.

question

CC: Have you always been a solo artist, or have you ever been in a band or anything? Do you like collaborating with other artists?

cult friends: I've mostly existed adjacent to bands. I had a "band" in early high school that never fully took shape, followed by a songwriting duo that dissolved quickly, and a lot of "we should make something" conversations that never quite happened. I don't have many close friends who play music, and even fewer whose internal logic overlaps with mine in a way that would naturally lead to a collaboration.

I do love playing with people, though. Recently, I've been working more with artists I've found online whose music feels adjacent to my own. Those collaborations usually happen by exchanging half-finished tracks, sampling each other's work, without ever being in the same room.
In-person collaborations though— where everyone builds something entirely from scratch in the same room —have struggled to develop organically.

next page

d pic courtesy
t friends

background pic courtesy of cult friends

question

CC: I really like the recording projects where you would record a song every day for a month. How did you approach that idea - was it an exercise, a personal challenge, or something else?

cult friends: I was originally inspired by Michelle Zauner of Japanese Breakfast, who released June, a similar song-a-day project in 2013. I've always struggled with finishing songs; I would keep adjusting them, sanding them down, until they lost whatever made them feel alive. Nothing ever felt truly "done," so I'd abandon tracks or leave them to rot as sketches. And they'd stopped feeling like mine at all.

Those projects became a way to outsmart my own perfectionist tendencies. I didn't allow myself to revise anything after the day was over, and I had to show up no matter what; I couldn't wait around for inspiration to strike once every six months. The exercise wasn't about productivity so much as learning when to stop and trusting that significance doesn't always announce itself immediately.

question

CC: When you do your recordings, do you always do them in the same setting or room? If you record in different places - what's the most interesting (or bizarre) place you've ever recorded at?

cult friends: I usually record in my room, almost always at night. When I made Vaticide, I was living in a very small room in Madrid. My upstairs neighbors would stomp on the floor whenever I played anything, which forced me to record everything DI and sing as quietly as possible. The constraint became part of the sound... a sort of... enforced inwardness.

More recently, I've recorded songs in friends' houses (So Secure, So Torpefied and Sobering (discalced)) and the spaces directly shaped the songs. For So Secure, So Torpefied, I recorded guitar and vocals simultaneously, which meant I couldn't remove the loud hum from the freezer behind me. And the cat you hear in Sobering isn't mine. That recording was originally just meant to be a voice memo so I wouldn't forget the song, but I ended up growing attached to it.

Last year, I spent about a month in Guatemala and recorded a few things in an abandoned building because it was the only place I could truly be alone. A Springsteen cover and a demo called nothing were recorded there (both on my SoundCloud). I later found out the building had been left unfinished after someone hung themselves in it. As amazing as the concrete reverb was, the space definitely carried a strange energy.

next page

bonus question

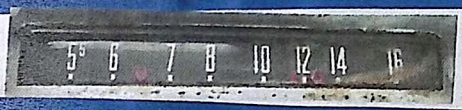
CC: Bonus question! Do you have any favorite radio stations? Feel free to shout out any cos I'm always looking for more to listen to!

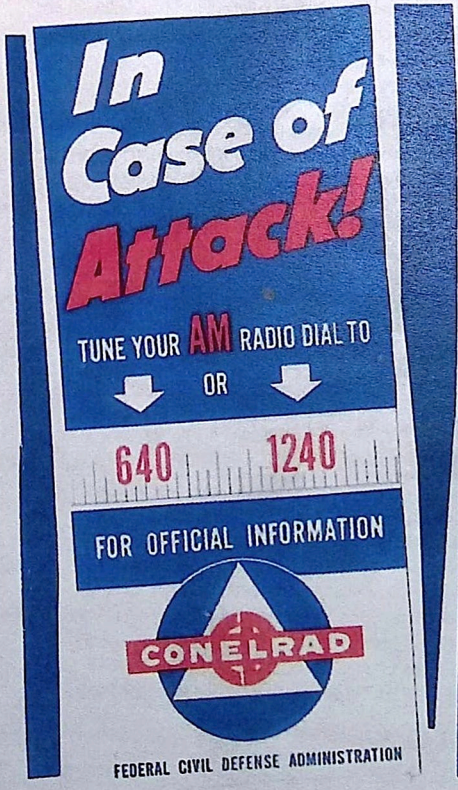
cult friends: I listen to Radio Cristiana España quite a lot but I also spend time on Radio Garden and seeing what I can find. Anything in West Africa or Brazil is always great.

A million thanks go out to cult friends for doing the Q&A!

the end.

THE FUN FUN WORLD OF CONELRAD !!!!





Conelrad was the first form of a govt emergency broadcast transmission service. It was formed in 1951 and lasted until 1963, when it was replaced by the Emergency Broadcast System. Wanna know why I'm interested in it? Well I'll tell ya. All radios manufactured during that time had these little markings on the dial that pinpointed exactly where you were to tune to in case the air raid sirens started going off. So, every radio had either a red dot or a red pyramid at 640 AM and 1240 AM. When I was a kid, I thought that the red dot at 640 AM was a marker for WSM 650 outta Nashville, cos I mean everybody listened to that.... right? Anyways. The govt promotional artwork for Conelrad that was plastered all over the place back then is soooooooo dystopian and Fallout-like. I sorta wanna get a shirt with the Conelrad logo on it.

what say you?

THIS YEAR I'VE DECIDED TO WATCH EVERY EPISODE OF.....

SABRINA THE TEENAGE WITCH

AND NO, I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT THE CHILLING ADVENTURES OF SABRINA — I MEAN THE MELISSA JOAN HART EPIC SERIES THAT RAN FROM 1996 TIL 2003. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO SHARE SOME OF MY INITIAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE SHOW IF YOU'RE DOWN? (FULL DISCLOSURE: I'M ONLY AROUND 7 EPISODES IN TO SEASON ONE AS OF PRESS TIME.) OKAY HERE GOES.

1 - The show has this soothing ambient vibe to it, and i attribute that to the sound design. I can't really put my finger on what it **IS**, but something about it gives off this calming effect on me. The studio audience is not overbearing and loud - that's a huge plus. Also nearly everyone'e voice on the show is just.....well kinda soothing. I can't explain it. But i'm gonna give points to whoever was in control of the sound mixing. BRAVO.

2 - CAMEOS. Lots of them. Like I said, I'm only 7 episodes in and I've already seen the likes of **Randy Travis, Penn Jillette, Sally Jessie Raphael, Brian Austin Green**, and more. It's like, everyone got pulled in to the show. It's a who's - who of 90s pop culture up in there!

3 - It doesn't stress me out **AT ALL**. Even when Sabrina gets into the deepest of all deep shit situations, there's no stress. I think it's because you ultimately know that her witchy aunts could always bail her out. So yeah, you could officially call this a "comfort show."

4 - The girl that plays Sabrina's best friend, **Jenny**, has the coolest and most subtle lisp. It adds to the sound design appeal (see bullet point #1)

5 - **Frank Conniff**, is the story editor on every episode so far, which might have a lot to do with the witty humor. That's Frank from **Mystery Science Theater 3000!** A LIVING LEGEND.

random story number 3. (random story #3.)

the tragic death of **rob reiner** led to me going through yet another **spinal tap** phase. is it safe to say that movie is the best comedy movie of all time? no....it's not. but it's up there. definitely the best music related comedy. anyways i reminisced about the time i saw the 'tap at ye olde **ryman**. it was a REALLY surreal thing. and since it was old nashville, i honestly think it wasn't even sold out. how crazy. after the show i waited around to meet them. i got to meet **harry shearer** and **michael mckean**. both were super nice and signed my spinal tap laserdisc. **christopher guest** was sick and went straight back to the hotel after the show so no-go on him. but yes, the rumors are true.....talking to harry shearer is like talking to **reverend lovejoy** from the **simpsons**. or **handsome dan** from **wayne's world 2**. for obvious reasons, silly.

well that's it for this issue - hope you enjoyed - thanks thanks